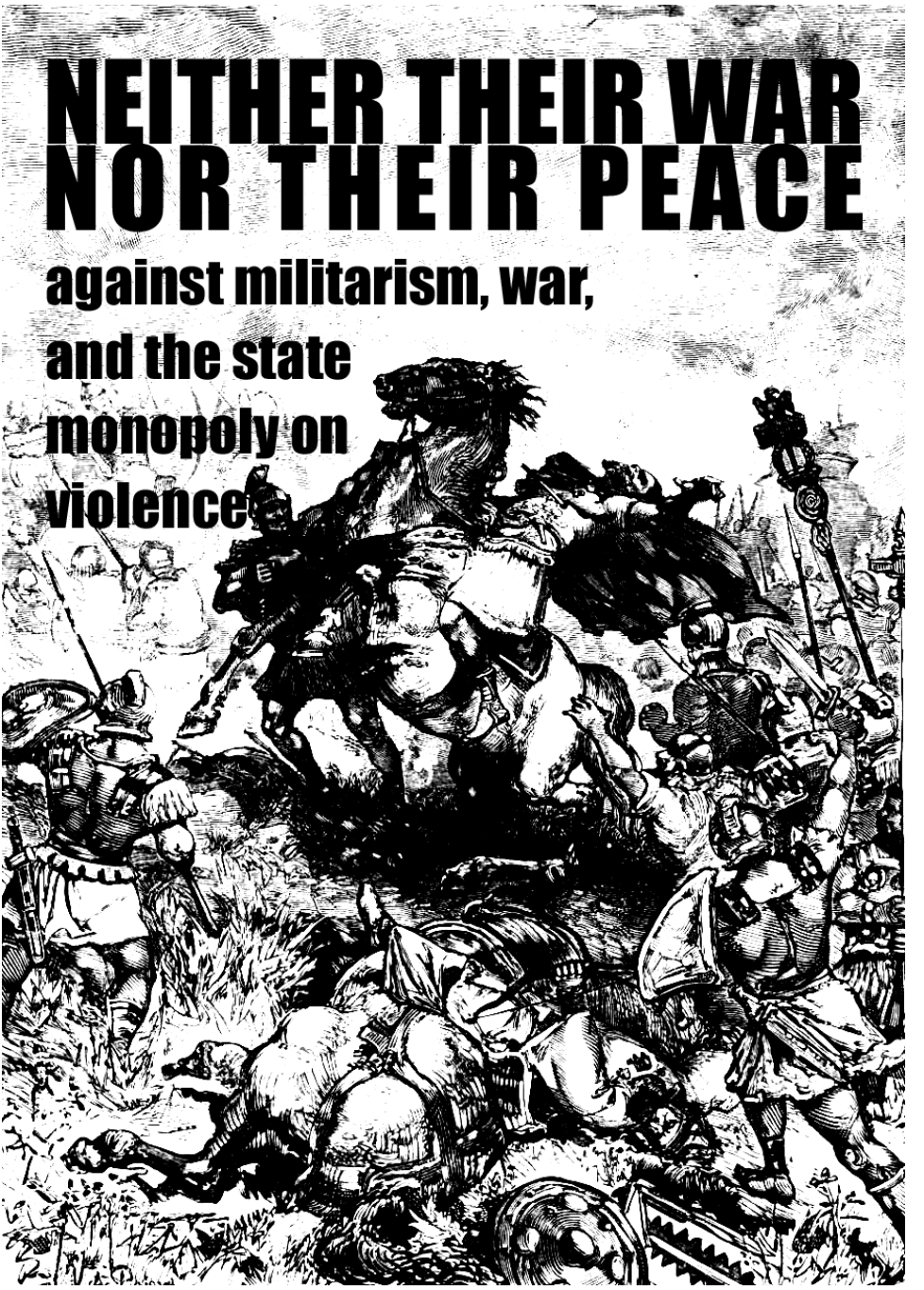
NEITHER THEIR WAR NOR THEIR PEACE

against militarism, war, and the state monopoly on violence



INTRODUCTION

Of course, anarchists oppose the state's wars. Such wars are nothing more than violent contentions between various rulers over who is going to control what. And the cannon fodder for these battles is always those who are ruled, goaded by adulation of some abstract ideal or simply succumbing to the habit of obedience-in any case, it is not the rulers, the exploiters whose interests these wars serve, who die.

But anarchist opposition to war is not a pacifist refusal of violence. Rather it is a refusal of militarism-of that system of social relationships founded on hierarchy, obedience, the dismantling of the individual, the quantified perception of the other that allows for indiscriminate killing and the description of those killed as a body count. It is this way of relating that allows for concepts like collateral damage and friendly fire. Desiring qualitatively different ways of relating, we carry out or attacks in a different way, one that reflects our aspirations for relations without measure, for a world where domination is impossible, because no one will obey-each being so confident in his own will as to make hierarchical relationships impossible.

Anarchist anti-militarism also needs to deal with the ongoing social war of the exploiters against those whom they exploit the daily attacks that take the form of accidents and disasters as well as conscious policies of repression. This ongoing social war makes a pacifist approach untenable. The refusal to fight back is already surrender, but recognizing that militarization is an essential aspect of what we are trying to destroy indicates the need to avoid the militarization of our struggle. Social insurrection may need arms, but it does not need armies.

The following essays deal with anarchist opposition to war and militarism. The first two texts were written during the bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999 and put out as part of a newsletter in Italy and France at that time. I have also included several texts written at the beginning of the current "war against terrorism". I present them for discussion aimed at creating an anarchist anti-militarist practice.

LETTER TO THE EXPLOITED:

On The Purpose of Militarism and
the World Around Which It Turns
(translated from Italian)

"That the proprietors are chauvinists in the name of their mansion; that the financiers praise the army that, for pay, stands guard over the cash box; that the bourgeoisie hail the fag that covers their merchandise, this is understood without effort. Even that certain semi philosophers, people of tranquility and tradition, that coin collectors and archeologists, that old poets and prostitutes prostrate themselves before power-this is also comprehensible. But that the helots, the maltreated that the proletariat would be patriot-why, then?"
-Zo d'Axa

Militarism is at the center of this society.

Militarism is not merely an ensemble of institutions (the police, the army...) created to defend the established order with force; it is also a culture-a culture of obedience, of discipline, of submission, of the planned negation of all individuality.

Militarism is every order shouted and carried out, every act carried out by those who have not decided either the reasons or the means, every uniform of cloth or of the mind, every hierarchy, every sacred cause that stirs flags and calls to sacrifice, every profane cause that exploits with the rhetoric of rationality. Militarism is the boss at work and the police on the street.

Militarism is anyone who is indignant about war without being indignant about its reverse, about a peace made of hierarchy and exploitation. It is anyone who begs us to stay calm-because everything is already so difficult, because the world has already changed so much, because there is nothing else left to do than to light candles and play ring-around-the-rosy around the military bases.

Militarism is anyone who speaks and acts in our names; anyone who wants us to be soldiers, even if in the so-called "revolutionary" army;

anyone who promises us a bright future - provided one advances in right, ranks in the shadow of his or her flag.

Militarism is anyone who tells us that it is impossible to combat militarism without using its means.

THE SPIDER WEB

In this society, a clear separation between civil and military institutions is impossible. The economy scatters the world with corpses through the play of financial speculation. The multinationals that decide the fate of that which we once called agriculture with their seed rackets are the same ones that produce and sell arms. Many technological innovations enter into the civil market only after having been elaborated and tested by the military. Furthermore, the production of arms is possible only thanks to the collaboration of numerous non-military enterprises such as those of transportation, of electronic devices and of precision optics, to mention only a few. This doesn't count those which allow the everyday functioning of the military, from the restocking of food to the supply of clothing, from the systems of communication to the maintenance of machinery.

To give another example, the nuclear industry-even leaving out the problem of its use by the military and that of its poisoning of the earth-requires an organization and control similar to that of the army. More generally, economic activity turns increasingly toward the techno-bureaucratic administration of the existing order and toward the informatic control of the population. Every day we hear talk of video-surveillance, of the gathering of information through every sort of magnetic device, of communication between medical, advertising and financial data banks and those of the police.

THE KNOTS IN THE WEB

The bombing in the former Yugoslavia and the massacre of the Kosovars have been among us from time immemorial in all that we do not call "war They are in the calculations of the industrialist and in the submission of the worker, in the voice of the teacher and in the obedience of the student, in the rally of the politician and in the

boredom of the citizen. They are in the ticking of the clock; they are in every social role.

But if the war machine, which daily renders war possible in the world, appears to us as an untouchable monster, it is because from here we don't see the concrete presence upon the territory, all the tiles-even the least evident that compose this mosaic of death. It is because from here we don't see the instigators, all the political and economic institutions, all the businesses and financial groups that set it in motion.

With a more discreet structural presence and with the future professional army, the military machine becomes increasingly "invisible", but the more "invisible" it becomes, the more it absorbs and penetrates the social, giving it the appearance of an enormous barracks.

This is why all the speeches about the separation between the economy of peace and the economy of war have no basis. In the same way, the purposes of civil reconversion of military structures or those of fiscal objection to military expenses are abstracted in an abstraction always functional for power. (On the other hand they are impossible to distinguish given the global nature of the state budget.)

CUTTING THE KNOTS

Genocide, institutionalized and gregarious violence, the hierarchy of the sword, blind obedience, the complete undermining of individual responsibility are unmasked and fought: they are the means of war. Together with these, the plans for division by the powers that be, by the capitalists and the states, are refused-it is worth mentioning the objectives of war, even when these are reached through diplomacy. In the same way, it becomes necessary to refuse not only the objects of mercantile production-profit above all and from all-but also its methods: the division between who decides and who carries out, specialization, the domination of machines over people, the subjugation of nature and the alienation of relationships.

To sabotage their war then, one must try to attack their peace: in all the thousand threads and knots of the military spider web. But without creating organizations and without creating leaders. Otherwise, even without uniforms, even in times of peace, we would all remain like soldiers, accomplice and victim of an immense enterprise of death.

Ready, aim...
fire!
And the
soldier,
Masetti,
shoots...But
at his captain.

HUMANITARIANISM IN CAMOUFLAGE

(translated from Italian)

States very rarely allow the sordid motives behind their actions to emerge in the light of the sun. The reason of state almost always advances in camouflage, particularly when it involves a war, the mode of action that arises from the very nature of every government. There is not one single head of state, of any nationality whatsoever, who ever admits that the objective of war is to consolidate the foundations of power for the owning classes, the foundations of exploitation and of the rule of capitalism. In order to gain approval from its citizens-if not their bellicose enthusiasm-it must, necessarily, present its actions in the most acceptable and generous forms, as the expression of some general and superior cause in which its subjects can recognize themselves and thanks to which they can identify their supposed enemy. In the West, the ultimate such cause is that of humanity which seems to relegate national causes to a second place, at least for the moment.

Humanitarianism is the war fought in the name of humanity; it is militarism with a human face. In Western Europe and the United States today, it is difficult to use the myth of defense of the territory of the nation-state to justify wars such as those fought by NATO, since it is evident that no local gang-boss residing in Belgrade or elsewhere threatens the integrity of lands which, with the United States in the lead, want to play the role of world police and make the indispensable world order of their hegemony and monopoly to reign.

It is not by chance that humanitarianism has become one of the principle justifications for such wars. Because at our latitudes, the illusion most shared by the helots of capital is that democracy constitutes the most advanced form of social relationship, the model of protector state from which the whole world could benefit. In the epoch of the triumph of democracy, the model state must not just protect its

own, those who live on its national soil, but also others, beyond the border, who are persecuted by whatever Milosevic.

Humanitarianism is the new morality for times of war. It is the good Christian conscience of the *laity of the Republic* that wants the authority of the state to regulate the great social questions above their heads, without letting their daily survival and security be disturbed by it. Their crocodile tears over the misfortunes of others in Kosovo or elsewhere, soon forgotten, are part of this hypocritical and selfish comedy that absolves the NATO armies, the pillar of the global order, of the of the ignominy perpetrated through high technology around the world.

All this shows that "humanitarian reason", the description coined by the traveling salesmen of national charity, is simply one of the faces of the reason of state. As such, it could only be a variable structure: in terms of the circumstances and interests in play, the state sorts out who might deserve the just work of organized charity from the Red Cross or from supposed nongovernmental organizations with an eyedropper. From the beginning, those useless to the new world order in gestation are excluded from it-millions of human beings in Kosovo and elsewhere for whom capital has no use and who could calmly croak from the indifference-along with those who threaten it like Serbian deserters: the solicitude of France, for example, goes as far as returning them to Serbia. Humanitarianism mocks at real human beings, particularly those who revolt.

In every war, there are always those individuals who, sickened by the smell of blood and by the heinousness of their masters, refuse the ignoble role which would play into the hands of the state, disobeying it and fraternizing with those who have been pointed out to them as enemy. The function of humanitarianism is really that of extinguishing every spontaneous outburst of such feelings and recuperating them for the greater profit of the state.

Now, every ensuing break with the logic of war passes as well for the refusal of that which justifies it, even when that justification takes on the mellow appearance of the humanitarian ideology.

AGAINST MILITARISM:

The State, Exploitation and War

"War is the health of the state." The truth of this statement stems from a deeper reality: war is, in fact, the basic functioning of the state. But to understand this one must have clarity of the nature of war and "peace". During the times when most people considered war in terms of the threat of nuclear annihilation, fear clouded understanding. Although this threat hasn't actually disappeared, it no longer seems to loom on the horizon with the immediacy that it had in the `80's and before. The military actions we have seen in recent years could remove the cloud that prevents a clear understanding of the nature of war if we examine them well.

In recent decades there have been very few declared wars in spite of the fact that military actions have constant. As early as the `60's, the U.S. war against Viet Nam was never declared as such, but rather started as "advising" and then evolved into a "police action". Since then military actions have been known by such names as "peacekeeping mission", "humanitarian mission", `surgical strike", etc.

This apparently Orwellian language is in fact very revealing to those who examine it carefully. If the bombing of hospitals and apartment buildings can be a "police action", then events such as the bombing of the MOVE house in Philadelphia are simply par for the course. It should also come as no surprise that increasingly big city police forces are receiving military training and that the Marines have been training in American cities for dealing with urban unrest. In the case of the former, we are dealing with the training of "peace officers", and in the case of the latter, with the training of "peace-keeping forces". The unity of purpose between the police and the military is thus quite evident.

The purpose which these two institutions serve is social peace. But if armed organizations are necessary for the maintenance of social peace, then this so-called "peace" rests on a bed-rock of violence. All states, however democratic, only exist by means of force. From its beginning, the purpose of the state has always been to maintain the privilege of the

powerful few against the exploited many. In light of this, it is evident that social peace means nothing other than the suppression of rebellion, of any uprising of the exploited. Such suppression involves violence or the threat of violence-the perpetual terrorism of the state visible in uniform on every street. Thus, social peace is simply an aspect of the ongoing social war of the rulers against those who they exploit, the war necessary to maintain capitalism and the state.

In this light pacifism is useless against militarism and war. To call states to interact peacefully is to ignore the primary function of the state. For the state, war is peace-that is to say, violence the way to maintain social peace, the continuation of domination and exploitation. This is as true for democratic states as it is for blatantly dictatorial and oligarchic regimes. The former merely supplement the force of arms with the illusory participation in consensus creating "dialogue"-which always upholds the present order-as a means to keep the exploited under control. So if the struggle against militarism and war is not to be a futile symbolic gesture that ultimately upholds what it claims to fight, it must leave behind the moralisms of pacifism and humanitarianism which the state has already drawn into the realm of its justifications for war. This struggle must recognize the reality of the ongoing social war against the exploited and of the necessity to transform itself into a revolutionary struggle aimed at destroying the state and capital. For only when the state and capital are destroyed will the ongoing social war come to an end.

ANARCHIST ANTI-MILITARISM AND THE ALL VOLUNTEER ARMY

The easing of the immediacy of the nuclear threat and the lack of actual conscription seems to have reduced the importance of the question of militarism in the eyes of many anarchists in the United States. In most other countries, military service is mandatory and this central aspect of the functioning of the state cannot be so readily overlooked. But to ignore this matter here in the, United States-or to consider it only in terms of its blatant excesses-is shortsighted to put it mildly.

At present, although no one is being drafted in this country, young men of 18 years are still required to register for the draft. Though very few have been prosecuted for the refusal to register, the state has used other tactics to coerce cooperation. Most notably it has declared that those who do not register for the draft to be ineligible to receive financial aid for higher education. Obviously, such economic threats affect the exploited classes the most.

However, even though conscription remains a possibility in this country with the apparatus fully in place, it is unlikely that it will be reinstated soon. The all-volunteer military has served its purpose well and numbers of volunteers have not been lacking. In their war against the exploited, the masters in this country have used the atomizing ideal of the "American Dream"-the impossible promise that anyone who puts their mind to it can achieve economic prosperity through hard work. In the 1950's and 1960's, the axiom, "To get a good job you need a good education", was appended to this pathetic "dream", and education came to be seen as the key to escape from impoverishment and the slums.

Well before the draft was suspended in the 1970's, the government instituted programs to pay for the university education of those who

served in the military once their term of service was over. Here was a means for the poor to get the education they were told would open the door to a good job and subsequent economic prosperity. In fact, throughout the 1970's and 1980's, military enlistment propaganda sounded like advertisements for job training courses and educational benefits. Clearly, it was meant to appeal to the exploited classes, to draw them in with the hope of finding a way to make it within this society.

Thus, the state uses a two-sided tactic to suppress revolt among the exploited. On the one hand it promises the possibility of raising oneself on one's own out of the impoverished and exploited condition one has suffered into a condition of relative prosperity-thus, turning ones energy toward raising oneself up within the social order rather than toward rising up against it. On the other hand, it trains one to enforce domination and exploitation here and in other countries. Here we see one of the most manipulative aspects of the social war at work.

In the past few years, there has been a change in the needs of the military. Significant technological changes have combined with changes in the types of wars that are fought to bring about a need for a specific type of military personnel. On the one hand, most foreign wars that the U.S. becomes involved in are quick operations involving high-tech equipment that allows massive bombing from a distance, with ground troops mostly involved in so-called "clean-up" operations. Thus a higher level of technical ability is needed.

On the other hand, there is the question of social unrest. In such a situation in this country, massive bombing would be mostly out of the question. Too many useful economic resources could be lost. The recent training of Marines in several locales in the U.S. for dealing with social unrest is indicative of this tendency. In this case the military clearly needs people who accept the agenda of the state, who view its enemies as their own-in other words, patriots who feel they have a stake in the system. Could the most exploited be expected to show such loyalty to their exploiters? It is interesting in this light that enlistment propaganda has changed. Instead of talking about training programs and educational benefits, it now talks about patriotism, heroism and serving the great causes of democracy and American "freedom" around the world. It is meant to appeal to a certain type of person, the type who can be trusted

in any of the situations in which he or she might be used-including the suppression of an insurrection here.

So how do we as anarchists approach anti-militarist struggle in light of these realities? It is necessary to clarify the reality of the ongoing daily social war of the rulers against the exploited. This is the starting point. It is also essential to develop a clear understanding of the relationship of the various methods that the state uses to counteract potential revolt, from dangling the carrot of the American (pipe-)Dream in front of the exploited to police and military suppression of any uprisings. With a well-developed analysis of what war and the military are we can expose the ways that they intensify exploitation and encourage abstention and insubordination. The question of how we go about this is one to be discussed and acted upon starting from our realization that militarism and the state go hand in hand. To destroy the one, it is necessary to destroy the other.

ACTS OF TERRORISM, ACTS OF WAR

The recent attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, along with the one near Camp David in Pennsylvania, were undoubtedly acts of terrorism. The perpetrators of these acts hijacked passenger planes full of people and crashed them into buildings without giving a thought to the passengers of the plane or the visitors who frequent the World Trade Center. The indiscriminate nature of its violence, justified with a political rationalization, is what distinguishes terrorism from other forms of violence. But if one thinks about this too carefully, some frightening parallels become evident. What, after all, is the bombing of hospitals, orphanages, residential areas, rice paddies, rural villages-if not indiscriminate violence? Yet this is the practice that the United States government carried out in Vietnam and Iraq, and that the United Nations forces largely under U.S. control carried out in Yugoslavia. Oh, of course, there were good reasons for these acts, political rationalizations to justify these acts of indiscriminate violence. Yes, the parallels are, indeed, frightening. But these actions carried out by the U.S. government were acts of state, police actions, acts of war-and this apparently distinguishes them from acts of terrorism.

In this light though, the words of Senator John McCain are telling. Speaking of the attacks on the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and possibly Camp David, he said, "These attacks clearly constitute an act of war." But if acts of terrorism can be acts of war, then the acts of indiscriminate violence carried out by the United States government and its allies in the Viet Nam war, in the Gulf war, in the "police action" in Yugoslavia must all be considered acts of terrorism-unless the definition of the act changes depending on who does it.

In fact, if we look at the origin of the word terrorism, we find that it traces back to the Reign of Terror in France in the 1790's, when the newly established republican state used indiscriminate violence to destroy all resistance to its rule whether from the old aristocracy or from

the underclass who dreamed of taking the revolution much farther than the mere founding of a republic. Thus, terrorism, in its origin, was a practice of indiscriminate violence carried out by a state to reinforce its power. Furthermore, this new French state was supposedly a democratic state-a rule by the people. According to the ideology of democracy, the state is the people. For the French state established in the 1790's, this meant that all enemies of the state were enemies of the people, and this was sufficient justification for the indiscriminate violence of the Reign of Terror. But the equation of the state with the people provides justification for terrorism in another way. If a people are the state that rules them, then an attack against those people is an attack against their state. The method of warfare carried out by democratic states throughout the world indicates that this is precisely the thinking of the leaders of those states-to bomb hospitals, schools, orphanages, rice paddies, residential areas is to bomb the Yugoslav, Iraqi, Vietnamese states. Should we then be surprised when the contenders for state power who lack the resources of the United States government use this same horrifyingly democratic logic with the means they have at their disposal? Though these people may not yet be established in power, their acts can rightly be considered acts of a state in potential-acts of war, and so, due to the current methodology of war, acts of terrorism.

The American state will use these recent acts to justify intensified repression, the democratically accepted suppression of freedom. Acts of revolt will be painted with the brush of terrorism. But real terrorism is always an act of indiscriminate, rationalized violence aimed at the establishment and enforcement of power. Thus one can rightly equate acts of war, police actions and acts of terrorism. All are acts of state-actual states or potential states. And only the destruction of the state can bring an end to terrorism. If, as Bush says, "we have seen evil", it is in the terrorism the state imposes on our lives day after day.

The six texts that follow appeared in two small newsletters I put out in the early days of the current "war on terrorism" with the aim of countering the "unity" the politicians and the media were promoting. The title of this newsletter was the same as that of this pamphlet: "Neither their war, nor their peace". I have made a few minor revisions.

AGAINST THE MYTH OF UNITY

If we are to believe what the mass media and the politicians tell us, all of the people of the United States are indeed now united in a common feeling and a common goal. We are all one in the desire to fight terrorism. Every difference is forgotten in the name of ridding the world of this scourge.

In fact, this unity that is proclaimed so loudly and praised so effusively is a fairy tale. It could not be otherwise. "Terrorism" is a buzzword that has not been adequately defined by the government or the media. While we may all recognize the attacks of September 11 as terrorist acts, there are too many doubts as to what else may fall under this definition. This raises the question of what role the U.S. has played in acts of terrorism throughout the world or where the line between acts of terrorism and acts of war is. Is this a time for patriotism? Or maybe for some serious questioning of what those who rule us have done and will do?

Even the varieties of sorrow, fear and pain felt due to these attacks differs from person to person. I am sorry that thousands died in these attacks and that their loved ones are suffering from the loss. But I feel no sorrow for the damage to monstrous buildings symbolizing the economic and military power of America. And what I fear is the type of repression against dissent and revolt that we can expect in this country in the name of this "war on terrorism"-what I fear is the terrorism of the state against those who oppose it which of course will call itself the defense of freedom.

So I want to openly raise a voice against the myth of unity, to express revolt against the call for war the American state has issued, because it will not be a war against terrorism, but against the struggle for freedom.

DEFINING TERRORISM

As the American state calls the world to a "war against terrorism", it carefully avoids explaining what it means by terrorism. What need is there? We all can see that the acts carried out on September 11 were terrorist acts. The indiscriminate killing of the passengers on the flights and of the workers and visitors at the World Trade Center most of whom could not be implicated in the making or executing of U.S. foreign policy and the political motivation behind these actions combine to leave no question of their nature. But here we begin to develop a definition for terrorism. It could be defined as the use of indiscriminate violence to achieve a political aim, generally through the spread of fear within a given population.

A brief look at the origin of the word could clarify things further. The word terrorism was first used to describe the policy put into practice by the newly formed republican state in France in 1793, also known as the Reign of Terror. The purpose of this policy was to eliminate all opposition to the new state through mass executions of everyone who might be considered a threat to the newly formed state, regardless of any proof or of the political or social positions of those killed. The aim was not so much to eliminate the old aristocrats, many of whom might easily be useful in the new regime as to suppress the continuing revolution that was threatening to bring down the new regime. The justification for this terror was that the new state was the rule of the people and so enemies of the state were enemies of the people. Thus the first recognized terrorist activity was an act of indiscriminate violence institutionalized by a state that justified its actions on democratic and humanistic grounds for the purpose of suppressing opposition and revolt. For approximately the next hundred years, terrorism was recognized as a policy of certain states by which they used indiscriminate violence to establish and enforce their power. It was only in the late 1800's, when widespread revolt began to express itself openly often in violent ways that the word come to be applied to revolutionary violence as well.

It is normal in the evolution of languages for the meanings of words to transform, but not to be turned on their heads. For this reason, terrorism can only be a meaningful term of it keeps some of its original characteristics. I would argue that terrorism is best understood as either the use of *indiscriminate* violence or the threat of indiscriminate violence in order to induce fear in a population with a political aim, or the use of the threat of violence *by a state* to enforce its power over its own or another population.

Bush's false choice

A basic *part* of this definition is that terrorism is always an act of *power* intended to induce fear. If we look at this definition it becomes obvious that at one time or another all states use terrorist methods. It is inherent to their functioning. Since the United States is currently the most powerful state on the planet, it is clearly implicated in terrorist activities throughout the globe. But the false choice in Bush's ultimatum to the world is more immediate than this. In calling for a "war on terrorism" rather than on specific people or nations, Bush is calling the world to a war with a far more nebulous enemy than even the war on drugs. Such a war can only be carried out through a strategy of increasing the repressive power of the state. Because no state dares to define terrorism too precisely since all states would be implicated in such a definition, states will decide arbitrarily, based on their own needs, what constitutes terrorism, and we can be sure that this conception will be broadened to encompass any serious revolt. This war will be waged as strongly against the so-called "internal enemy" as any external enemies. This will definitely mean increased police spying, harassment, searches, detentions, based solely on the fact that the state has decided one is a terrorist threat. In other words, the nebulous nature of a war on terrorism guarantees that it will increase the atmosphere of psychological terror which is the greatest weapon of every ruling class and every state against those they rule. The most disturbing aspect of this situation is that most people will accept this. We are always more frightened of the terror we don't know than of the one we face every day. So repressive state terror will most likely go forward with the democratic support of those who are ruled *in the name of a war against terrorism*. But some of us have been fighting against terrorism for years. We have been doing so precisely by fighting against the ruling order and

its police and military institutions that are the main source of terrorism world-wide. No state can lead a sincere battle against terrorism, because terrorism has been a strategy, of state all along, a strategy to which every state will turn whenever it has need to do so. The only way to put an end to terrorism is to put an end to the state. And by this I mean every state in the world.

THE FACE OF WORLD WAR THREE

Because I was born in 1955 and grew up in the 60's and 70's, my conception of World War 3 was that of nuclear annihilation, that unthinkable destruction of all life-or at least human life. It was so frightening that most people chose to put it out of there consciousness, but it nonetheless remained a subconscious fear in the back of our minds. The change in the past couple of decades in world power relations has largely put this possibility, rightly or not, out of our minds. But if we thought that World War 3 was no longer a possibility, recent events should change our minds about this.

Since the attacks of September 11, president Bush has called on all of the nations of the world to join in a war against terrorism. This is not a call to a metaphorical war, but to real battle involving arms and deaths. The enemy in this war is a nebulous practice (kept unclear intentionally since a clear definition of the enemy would undermine state aims) that can be seen everywhere-particularly if those in power are the one's making the determination. Such a phantasmic yet terrifying enemy meets a need that the U.S. government has had since the fall of the Soviet Union. It presents an ongoing threat to national security that justifies both increasing military and police powers. This enemy exists both externally and internally. In the name of defending the abstract freedom that the U.S. claims to represent, this enemy justifies the practical suppression of the freedom to rebel or act for oneself. Since, in spite of the use of Osama bin Laden as the face of this devil, it will, in fact, prove to be a faceless enemy-an omnipresent threat, this war and the emergency measures put into effect in its name need never come to an end. The newly formed Internal Security Council, the increased capacities for federal police agencies to spy on us, the increased policing of the borders, the erosion of `rights' that many take for granted (but that have never been more than a grant from the state anyway) will have no reason to end, since this phantom will continue to haunt the

shadows, and the state will be quick to point fingers whenever anyone forgets this. Even before the attacks the word terrorism was being flung around loosely to such an extent that even a computer geek who showed too much skill and imagination could be called a cyber-terrorist.

So this is the face of World War 3: an ongoing war against a faceless enemy defined by the state-thus, a war of the state against all who oppose or even seriously question it. Yet a war which most of those ruled and exploited by the social order of the state will support because they fear this faceless enemy the state has named. Only when we realize that the state is itself the terrorist will the real nature of this war become clear. It is the social war of the ruling class against those they rule, in which the ruled, as always, are the cannon-fodder.

THE REAL ENEMY

We are told it's a war against terrorism. But wouldn't this mean precisely a war against that threat of indiscriminate violence designed to impose some group's political will? Yet in the sight the warplanes rain their fire down upon Afghanistan. But Bush assures us that the US is a friend of the Afghani people and that the bombs were carefully aimed at selective targets. Like the ones in Yugoslavia-that hit not only the Chinese embassy, but hospitals, residential areas, a refugee train and a suburb of Sofia, Bulgaria, a hundred miles away? Or like in Iraq, where the number of civilians killed by US bombs was in the tens of thousands as such "military targets" as children's hospitals were hit? Given the history of US military activity over the past four decades, any aerial bombing by the US is a threat of indiscriminate violence. Already, after two days of bombing the US military has killed four UN workers and destroyed one of their offices in its "selective bombing".

In the meantime on the home front, the pacifists beg the government to use the "other means" for dealing with this matter, while the government increases its police powers. What the pacifists haven't questioned is the real significance of this war. As usual they are so worried about the form, that they ignore the content. Within the first week after the September 11 attacks, Bush had formed a new executive body, the Home Security Council. The government has increased the legal monitoring of private communications. Since the government has broadened the meaning of terrorism in such a way that it could include any sort of direct action, we can expect harassment, raids and intimidation against radicals of all sorts. And the threat of having one's home ransacked in the middle of the night by armed thugs-no matter what their proclaimed reason-is a terrorist threat. This sort of activity has already been going on in the Northwest for years in an attempt to suppress radical environmentalist and anarchist activity and it is certain to spread.

Put simply, indiscriminate violence is the hidden threat behind all state power. In a real struggle against terrorism, the real enemy is the state.

WORK AND P(L)AY

The True Face of Patriotism

Since the attack of September 11, the praises of hard work and American productivity have been flowing from the mouths of media pundits and politicians. How could it be otherwise, since the economic effects of the attacks were so immediate? People may have needed time to think about what happened, to try to figure out all that was behind these fatal events and to weigh and come to an understanding of their own feelings, but the nation and the economy needed a return to business as usual-soon to be bolstered by the war that has been set in course. After all, there's the media to tell people what they are thinking and feeling, and it's simpler that way-the range of thought and emotion can thus be kept within acceptable parameters that don't threaten the social peace or raise questions that may expose us to too much reality. Already these events blew back the veil a bit more than ruling class would have liked, but the machinery of propaganda was immediately put into effect and flags were already hanging from windows of homes and businesses in profusion by September 12. The patriotic fervor was in full effect.

But the true face of patriotism took a few days to reveal itself. Even those in power had to recognize the necessity of a little time for recuperation for the most sensitive. First came the calls for American unity in the face of tragedy, then the hymns to work as a patriotic duty and finally the call to "enjoy ourselves". But in case we should misunderstand this last call, Bush specified: go to Disney World, to sports events, to concerts, movies, restaurants, all the myriads of wonderful entertainment at a price that will keep the economy healthy and keep America working.

But one must never question what she is working for. He should ignore the fact that American corporate and state interests have been behind much of the terrorist activity of the past twenty years. Especially since this might make it all too clear that the world of work and of consumer p(l)ay is, quite precisely, the world of terrorism, because it is

the world of domination and exploitation that has always maintained its existence through violence and the threat of violence, through murder, theft, war and pillage.

After these attacks, it is understandable that people want to fight against terrorism, but this fight will have to be a fight against the ruling class as a whole, and this leaves no place for nationalism or patriotism. Rather it is the revolutionary struggle of all those whose lives are stolen through the daily terror of this society against the order of work and p(l)ay, against the state and capitalism.

SOCIAL WAR BY OTHER MEANS

I believe it was Clausewitz who said that war was simply politics carried out by other means. I think that the reverse is a truer expression of social reality. Politics is simply the social war carried out using less bloody means. If we consider that it is always the ruling class and its lackeys who call for social peace, demanding that the exploited and excluded refrain from violence in dealing with their social condition, it becomes obvious that social peace is simply part of the strategy of the social war. For this reason, the peace movement must be rejected as a way of dealing with the current American call for war.

The peace movement is based on an ideology of nonviolence, a pacifist moral stance that ignores the reality of social relationships. Rather than examining real relationships of power, of domination and exploitation, it simply demands that the state continue to carry out its functions, but without violence, without bloodshed. But what are those functions? Are they not the maintenance of order, the protection of property, the enforcement (selective, of course) of the rule of law? And such activity could only be necessary if there are those who find that this social order does not meet their needs, does not offer them the lives they desire, puts them in the position of having to choose between resigned acceptance of often unbearable conditions or defiance of the rules and a constant battle of wits or arms against the dominant world. But these excluded ones did not begin this social war. The ruling class has always used violence or the threat of violence to lay claim to all of our lives. If the democratic regimes have managed to create a more sophisticated method of participatory domination, this does not change the fact that behind the ballot there is always the bullet to guarantee the maintenance of social peace, which is thus clearly the public face of the social war that keeps most of us passively in our places-even claiming to be content with this obedience that is called freedom. So whether the

state goes about its activities peacefully or through blatant violence, it is still carrying out the policy of the social war that keeps us in our place.

In this light, the pacifist protests become a farce. The demand that the American state and the states of the rest of the world carry on their current "war against terrorism" peacefully assumes that the state should indeed exist, and thus that the violence implicit in the present social order should continue-the violence that kills millions daily whether from starvation like in northern Africa and numerous other places, from poisoning by pollution and processed foods, accidents on the job, new, increasingly virulent diseases, the spiritual desolation of the culture of the market or the bullets of the state's uniformed guard dogs. The current "war against terrorism" is nothing other than the continuation of the daily policy of low level terror used by the state to guarantee we stay in line. It matters little whether the state uses bloody or bloodless means. The result is the same: our lives are not our own and we die, sooner or later without ever having really fully lived. Opposition to the current war can only make sense as opposition to the entire social order from which it has arisen. Such opposition cannot spring from a movement dedicated to nonviolence. Pacifism ultimately serves the state's ends by making us blind to the nature of the state. Against the violence of terrorism, the violence of war, the violence of the state, it is necessary to embrace revolutionary violence-the complete upheaval of all social relationships that maintain the institutional violence of those who rule us. We want neither their war, nor their peace, but their destruction.

AGAINST PACIFISM,
AGAINST MILITARISM,
AGAINST TERRORISM,
AGAINST THE STATE!

AGAINST THE STATE, AGAINST THE WAR

The current war that the United States and its British allies are waging in Afghanistan requires a clear response from anarchists. Since we oppose the state, we also oppose militarism and the wars of the state. So we need to ask ourselves how we can oppose the current war in practice in a way that is consistent with our anarchist aims and principles. In developing our response we need to understand the nature of a specifically anarchist opposition to militarism and war and develop our practice on these terms.

Anarchist opposition to war cannot base itself on humanitarian moralism. Moral principles that are placed above the real lives of individuals as a means of judging their value are easily transformed into justifications for the economic and political interests of those in power. In recent years, humanitarian morality has supported a myriad of atrocities. If NATO's humanitarian bombing of what's left of the Yugoslav federation and its subsequent occupation of Kosovo did not make this adequately clear, the current policy of dropping bombs and food packets on an already war-devastated land, allegedly for the purpose of destroying a small group of terrorists should leave no question as to the vacuity of humanitarianism. When we try to use the same values against the state that it uses to justify its activities, we get caught in a war of words in which the state has the upper hand and will find such attempts turned against us, since as revolutionaries we do not value all lives equally. The lives of those who rule us and the armed lackeys that they hire to defend them mean nothing to us, since they are the ones who have sucked the joy and wonder out of life transforming it into nothing more than different levels of survival at a price.

In the same light, anarchists do not oppose war in the name of peace. The peace of the state is the continuation of institutional violence at a different level. When the peace movement calls the US to stop the bombing in Afghanistan and instead go through the World Court and its

processes to carry out the so-called fight against terrorism, it is only calling the US to continue waging its war by other means. The aims of the American state are not brought into question, let alone the nature of the state. In fact, these other means are being used to wage the so-called "war at home". In practice, turning to the law means turning to the cops, the courts, the various institutions of detention and all that goes along with them. Anyone who has been put through this system knows the violence inherent in the legal process. These institutions of the state's peace are, in fact, weapons in the social war, unspoken threats against anyone who would rise up against their oppression as well as means of processing, storing and brutalizing the most oppressed. Furthermore, what distinguishes anarchism from other revolutionary perspectives is the primacy it gives to the freedom of every individual to create her own life as he sees fit. Thus, peace is not our top priority. The revolutionary destruction of the state and capitalism would put an end to institutional violence, but conflicts between individuals world still exist, and since the institutions of state violence are also 'he institutions of control, their destruction would mean that individuals would have to work out these conflicts for themselves in their own way-and that may include violence. In my opinion, this would not be a bad thing. The institutions through which social peace has been maintained are the same as those through which domination is maintained, and the point is to end all domination.

Anarchists oppose the wars of the state because these wars always enforce the power of the state and the interests of the ruling class. These interests include the obvious ones of economic and political hegemony in a particular region, but there are more subtle benefits to the state as well. By enforcing the use of a military methodology and mentality, war provides the state with the tools it needs not only for imposing its interests abroad, but also for suppressing class struggle and revolt at home. It also provides the state with a means for creating a sense of national unity that blinds the exploited and excluded to the real causes of their condition. In times of war, those at the bottom of the social order stand with their rulers against an alleged "common enemy"-but when one examines the corpses on the battlefield, none of the rulers are there. This is the nature of the unity produced by the wars between

states; it is just another ploy in the social war the ruling class wages daily against those who they exploit.

So anarchist opposition to war is an aspect of the revolutionary project of destroying the state. The methods we use in our struggle against the current war need to reflect this clearly. This will distinguish us from pacifists and others who are demanding that those in power use "peaceful" means to carry out their agenda. For most anti-war activists the top priority is to "stop the war". But when the war in Afghanistan ends, the social war through which the ruling class maintains its domination will continue, and so will the struggle of the exploited against their condition and the specific and conscious struggle of anarchists against the state, capital and all institutions of domination and exploitation. If we compromise our methods and principles in of her to forge false unifies to end the war, we are falling into the some trap as those who wear the flag because Bush and the media told them that our complex emotional reactions to the attacks of September 11 all come down to patriotism. So our methods of struggle need to reflect our insurrectional project. This means acting directly to destroy that which we oppose, organizing these actions autonomously, free of the agendas and platforms of any political or other formal group, refusing negotiation or compromise with those who rule us and making our attack unrelentingly. The United States was forced to withdraw its troops from Vietnam not because of the "nonviolent" anti-war movement at home (as certain pacifist mythmakers have tried to claim), but because by the early 1970's a majority of land and naval troops were in open and violent mutiny against their officers and the US military agenda. (For more information about this, check out "Harass the Brass" by Kevin. Keating. It can be found in The Bad Days Will End, issues #4-5 (double issue, Winter-Spring 2001), Alternative Press Review, Volume 6, Number 2/ Summer 2001 or at the webpage: www.altpr.ora/apr15/keating.html) The protests at home particularly actions sabotaging the war effort-certainly encouraged the troops in mutiny, but the mutiny is what forced the US withdrawal.

But the current war is not the same as the one in Vietnam. Popular support is great and chances of mutiny are almost nonexistent. But the basic lesson remains: the struggle against war does not succeed through demands or negotiations, but through the active refusal to fall into line

and the active obstruction of the war effort. Certainly, one of the essential tasks of anarchist is to counter the myth of unity with clear exposures of the role of the American state in creating the terror networks it now condemns, thus making it clear that the interests of the ruling class are not our interests. But the project of counter-information needs to be combined with direct attacks against the war effort and the social order that stands behind it.

ANTI-MILITARISM AND SOCIAL INSURRECTION

Of course, as an anarchist, I am opposed to all of the state's wars. If, historically, particular anarchists have supported certain wars (Kropotkin's support of the Allies in World War 1, for example), this has shown a lack of coherence in their analysis and a willingness to allow political and strategic thinking to take precedence over a principled attempt to create the life and world one wants here and now. Wars of the state can never increase freedom since freedom does not simply consist in a quantitative lessening of domination and exploitation (what Kropotkin perceived as the outcome of the defeat of imperialist Germany), but in a qualitative transformation of existence that destroys them, and state wars simply change the power relationships between those who dominate.

:,o the anarchist opposition to state wars is, in fact, opposition to the types of social relationships that make such war possible. In other words, it is opposition to militarism in its totality. And militarism is not just war as such. It is a social hierarchy of order givers and order takers. It is obedience, domination and submission. It is the capacity to perceive other human beings as abstractions, mere numbers, death counts. It is, at the same time, the domination of strategic considerations and efficiency for its own sake over life and the willingness to sacrifice oneself for a "Great Cause" that one has been taught to believe in.

Considered in this way, anti-militarism carries within it, not just the opposition to the state's wars, but also a conception of how we wish to carry out our revolutionary struggle against the state and capital. We are not pacifists. A qualitative transformation of life and relationships capable of destroying the institutions of domination and exploitation will involve a violent upheaval of conditions, a rupture with the present- that is to say a social insurrection. And here and now as well, as we confront these institutions in our lives, destructive attack is a legitimate and necessary response. But to militarize this struggle, to transform it

essentially into a question of strategies and tactics, of opposing forces and numbers, is to begin to create within our struggle that which we are trying to destroy. The essence of militarization is, in fact, the essence of the society of the market and the state: quantification, the measuring of all things. The anarchist ideal of the freedom of every individual to fully realize herself in free association with those of his choosing without interference from ruling social institutions or lack of access to all that is necessary to achieve this aim is, in fact, the very opposite of such a measured existence.

Armed struggle is likely to be part of any social insurrection, but this does not require the creation of a military force. Such a formation could even be considered as a sign that the far more significant movement of social subversion is weakening, that the transformation of social relationships has begun to stagnate. From an anarchist perspective, the specialization inherent in the formation of a revolutionary army has to be considered as a contradiction to anarchist principles. If, in the midst of social insurrection, the insurgent people as a whole arm themselves with all they need for their struggle, this would undermine the tendency toward militarization. When we remember that our primary aim is social subversion, the transformation of social relationships, that this is the real strength of the movement because it is in the process of this practice of subversion that we discover our indomitable singularity and that arms are simply a tool among many that we use in this project, then the importance of rejecting militarization should become quite clear. There is no joy in militarism. Armed joy is found in the collective project of individual self-realization finding its means to destroy all domination with every tool it hand, transforming life arm in hand.

Neither pacifism, nor militarism, but social insurrection.

this edition was redesigned and republished by
after the fall distribution and press
frederick, maryland
falldistro@gmail.com

Venomous Butterfly Publications
818 SW 3rd Ave., PMB 1237
Portland, OR 97217 USA
acraticus@angrynerds.com

anti-copyright ~ take this, and everything else